000 That it was primarily German poets and scholars who concerned themselves in detail with Lithuanian folk poetry is explained on the one hand by the close relation of the two peoples, on the other hand by the influence which the romanticism of the eighteenth century exercised on German poetry. Thus one can rightly speak of a Lithuanian contribution to German spiritual life.

533 [114] 5. The Lithuanian Folk Song in German Poetry

Around the end of the seventeenth century we hear for the first time from German sources details concerning Lithuanian folk poetry. Around the year 1690 Theodor Lepner, one time pastor in Ragnit, wrote his notable little book: Der Preusche Litauer. It was dedicated to the Electoress Sophie-Charlotte and appeared in 1744 in Danzig. The book is of special cultural-historical interest because Lepner, who in general--this may be added--did not at all esteem the Lithuanians, gives a quite drastic picture of Lithuanian folk customs. [534] He writes: "They have a peculiar type of trumpet or trombone which they call truba. This is made out of fir, with a hollow at the end, fairly /66/ wide and round like a trombone, on the outside tightly wound around with birch bark, over a fathom long. Two kerdels blow on such trombones at the same time, which makes quite a noise. Otherwise they have what the Germans call pig's head (kanklis --a type of zither), strung with nine or twelve brass strings, the drum, the fife and other flutes, a fiddle, and a bass iron; this only they buy at the store, the other pieces mentioned they all make themselves. Such artists are they!

"They are also all composers who give the melodies to their songs themselves, although they have also learned some from the Germans. They are inclined by nature to singing, and are thus fine musici naturales who brought with them into the

533

world the inclination to sing; now there arises from the women and girls at their banquets such howling and humming that one must stop one's ears from it. The kerdels are not especially fond of this science, but only the women and girls, who from morning, from the second cock crow on, until it gets light, make music at the hand mill, since the humming of the mill serves them as it were as a ground bass.

"The material of their songs are love songs, but they are concerned also with such things as just happen to occur to them and stand before their eyes. A few of them also sing spiritual songs at the hand mill, which happens at their banquets in drinking bouts of men and women, concerning which Wilhelmus Martinus, onetime pastor in Mummel, reports cleverly in his Latin poem of praise concerning the Lithuanian song book, which I thus give in /English/:

Lithuanian people, you are, I think, called thus
After a field trumpet, as it is called in Greek:
Your heart burns naturally for sound, song, rime;
You drive your merry cattle, that tears itself from the stall,
Out to the pasture in singing, you shout in walking, in plowing,
/67/ With untiring voice. On your wedding day,
At baptism and other assemblies, at home and in the taverns,
You sing of all that which may be known to you."

533
114 A few years after Lepner wrote his little book there appeared a book by Johann Arnold von

533
114 Brand, professor in Duisburg (died 1691): Reysen durch die Marck Brandenburg, Preussen, Churland, Liefland, Plesscovien, Gross-Naugardten, Tweerien und Moscovien. In this book, which was published in 1702 at Wesel by Heinrich Christian vor Hemmin, Brand reproduces two fragments of Lithuanian folk songs.

The first fragment, which he describes as "The usual drinking song of the Lithuanians," reads (p. 107):

Let us then, y heisa viva y,
Be merry, y heisa viva y.

The second, "Lament to the Unfaithful Betrothed," reads (p. 108):

Did you not love me?
I cut with you the rye,
I raked with you the hay,
I bound with you the oats.

From that year dates the interest with which German scholars and poets devoted themselves to Lithuanian folk poetry. In 1745 Philipp Ruhig, pastor in Walterkehmen, in his Betrachtungen der litauischen Sprache, published three folk songs, of which one is found in the later collection of Daukantas while another has become known from various anthologies. Ruhig reproduces the texts of these songs solely for linguistic reasons and even apologizes to his readers for claiming their attention with such vanities.

/68/ The translations of Ruhig are interesting inasmuch as they show the abundance of diminutives, so characteristic of the Lithuanian language, although the author obviously had not yet solved the problem of their translation into the German language. Thus the first of the dainos begins with the words: 1/ˆ

1/ˆ [See cat. 116, p. 77 -- Analyst]

533

The mother roasted and cooked it at once,
The roast was delicious and tasty and tender.

Zealously the sisters served it,
Many joyous guests came together.

They sat down at the table and sat there firmly,
And enjoyed themselves at the hearty feast.

They ate the sparrow at their leisure
And drank three barrels of beer with it.
(44)

44. A. V. Chamisso, op. cit., p. 138.

533
114

Chamisso's friend, Franz von Gaudy, adapted in 1844 a Lithuanian folk saga, "Die Pestjungfrau," into the German language, and Wilhelm Jordan published in the same year his Littauische Volkslieder und Sagen, which are strongly influenced by Rhesa. A large number of Lithuanian folk songs with melodies and German translations by H. Budrius, Ed. Gisevius, and P. von Bohlen were published in the N. Pr. Prov. Blätter, appearing since 1846. Of German poets then known but today forgotten, who were inspired by the Lithuanian folk poetry, Daumer (1800-1875) and J. F. Soldat may be mentioned. Also to be mentioned is Felix Dahn, whose poem of 1870, "Die Litauer in Frankreich," breathes a genuine Lithuanian mood.

Even this short survey of the influence of Lithuanian folk poetry on German poetry shows well enough that the Lithuanian contribution to the German spiritual /72/ life of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the area of poetry is not unimportant. The first scientific-critical translation of Lithuanian folk songs in the meter

533
114

of the original stems from Nesselman. In spite of the purely scientific purpose of his work, he also succeeded with a few poetically excellent translations (cf. on this point also the end of this chapter). The influence of the Lithuanian folk song appears also in the writings of A. K. T. Tielos: Thanatos (1905), Klänge aus Litauen (1911), Aus der Jugendzeit (1911). W. W. Ulmenried-Naujeck published Litauische Heide-Lieder und Dainos.

The World War, which brought a number of German poets in uniform into direct contact with the Lithuanian people, aroused anew the interest in the Lithuanian folk song in a number of German poets. Only Oskar Wöhrle, Herbert Eulenberg, and Richard Dehmel may be mentioned. (45) In the

[113]

45. The translations of O. Wöhrle are printed in Das Litauenbuch, Eine Auslese aus der Zeitung der X. Armee (1918), pp. 155-159. The poetic imitations of Richard Dehmel, based on the translations of Nesselmann and not always successful, are published in Die neue Rundschau, Vol XXVIII of the Freie Bühne, No. 1, January, 1917. For Herbert Eulenberg cf. Struck und Eulenberg, Skizzen aus Litauen, Weissrussland und Kurland (1916).

German press of those years, too, the great interest which the Lithuanian folk songs found in the broadest German circles is reflected. Unfortunately most of this interest vanished just as quickly as it had sprung up. Only in the most recent time can a slight reawakening be noticed. (46)

113

46. From the abundance of mostly popular literature on the Lithuanian folk song, a few essays may be mentioned which appeared